

- FINAL REPORT -

Of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee to the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ

October 2004

Introduction

Background

The Transition Coordinating Committee, which was responsible for implementing the restructure of the national setting of the United Church of Christ, requested that an evaluation of the new structure be carried out in the third year of the new structure's operation. The Executive Council of the United Church of Christ, at its April 2002 meeting, approved the formation of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee consisting of two members of the Executive Council, one member from each of the Covenanted Ministries boards and one representative of the Council of Conference Ministers. Two people from the national setting of the UCC were asked to serve as staff to the committee.

Purpose

The Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee was charged with two tasks:

- 1) **An evaluation of the new structure.** We pursued this by asking these key questions: Is the current structure consistent with the initial vision of the restructure? Is it functioning effectively? Does it demonstrate good stewardship of financial resources?
- 2) **Recommendations.** On the basis of the responses to, and evaluation of, those questions, the Committee was charged with offering recommendations. Note: the Committee was charged with an evaluation of the new *structure* (not of *personnel* or *job performance*).

Expectations

As the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee worked on a design for its mandate, we reviewed the documents that guided the restructuring process. We soon identified as "hopes" several stated objectives of the restructuring. These hopes became the framework for the interview model we employed. Our model, methodology and process were presented to, and approved by, the Executive Council at the March 2003 meeting. These hopes were and are:

1. The hope that the new structure would foster a **culture of cooperation and collaboration** across the UCC, and that there would be **equity among the partners**. The cooperation would be among the Collegium of Officers, among staff and directors of the Covenanted Ministries, between the Covenanted Ministries and the Conferences, and between the Covenanted Ministries and Local Churches.

2. The hope that there would be **coordination of ministry at the National Setting**; that there would be **strategic planning and visioning**; that the **leadership would engage the whole church in shaping mission mandates**.
3. The hope that there would be **accountability** to and for the whole church.
4. The hope that the restructure would create a **simpler, more integrated structure** that reduced redundancy among positions, streamlined financial accounting practices and generated new sources of funding.
5. The hope that the new structure would **foster the development of the United Church of Christ as a multi-cultural, multi-racial, Open and Affirming, and accessible church**.

Scope

One-on-one interviews and group soundings were conducted with National Staff; Covenanted Ministries Boards of Directors; Executive Council Members; Conference Ministers; Associate Conference Ministers; Seminary Presidents; Pension Board Executive Vice President; United Church Foundation Executive Vice President; Insurance Board Executive Director; CHHSM Executive Director; and representatives from CAIM; COREM; CHM; MRSEJ; PAAM; UBC; LGBT Coalition; Disabilities Ministries; Council of Theological Education; Council for Higher Education; Council for Ecumenism; and the Historical Societies.

Method

The interviews were in three forms:

1. Individual: One-on-one interviews were conducted by Zanglin & Associates, professional interviewers with no connection to the United Church of Christ. Individuals of ethnic and racial diversities had the opportunity to be interviewed by persons with whom they were comfortable and whom they felt could hear their answers accurately.
2. Group Soundings: Interviews were held for groups of ten to twelve people, conducted by professional interviewers or, in some settings, by the group itself, following prepared interview questions.
3. Surveys: Conference Ministers and the members of the Board of Directors of Justice and Witness Ministries were interviewed by a written form which they completed and returned to the transcriber. (Conference ministers were given the choice of responding in writing or requesting a telephone interview.)

Three hundred and twenty-two people were interviewed (many in groups) and sixty-eight written surveys were returned. The interviews were held off-site and were transcribed by non-UCC personnel.

Acknowledgements

The mandate of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee affects the whole life of the United Church of Christ and touches on many points: our ecclesiology, our sense of mission and vocation, our deep sense of who God is calling us to be and how God is calling us to organize ourselves. In approaching these matters, we are keenly aware of the consequences of this report for the life of our beloved Church. We have, therefore, assumed this task with prayerful hearts. We have also turned to, and depended upon, others for their advice, expertise and objectivity.

We wish to thank a number of people whose assistance has been invaluable:

First, we extend our profound gratitude to **Sheila M. Kelly**. From the outset Sheila believed we had the resources to manage much of this work in-house. Her belief in our abilities has saved the Church tens of thousands of dollars. She brought to this work tremendous knowledge. She also brought her heart and soul to this project in which she so deeply believed. Her untimely death saddened us deeply. We miss her.

We are deeply grateful to **Richard O. Sparrow**, who staffed this Committee with care and attention to detail.

We are thankful to **David A. Roozen**, Professor of Religion and Society and Director of Hartford Institute for Religion Research. David helped us design the kind of survey and methodology that would help answer our questions.

We are grateful for the professional expertise of **Zanglin & Associates**, with whom we contracted to conduct the interviews. It was reported to us that those interviewed felt comfortable and were afforded the opportunity to air their views fully.

Upon the death of Sheila Kelly and with a deadline looming, we called upon **Adair T. Lummis**, researcher with the Hartford Institute, to complete a compilation of the survey data. Adair read and expertly summarized thousands of pages of interviews in a very short time.

The committee thanks **all of those who participated** in the interview process. This took time, thoughtfulness and, in many cases, courage. We are thankful for your honesty and for your passion for, and commitment to, the mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ.

Costs

Total Project Budget: \$40,000,

Expenditures to date:

- Contract with David Roozen, \$3,000
- Contract with Adair Lummis, \$6,100
- Contract with Interviewers, \$17,034
- Transcription Costs, \$6,024
- Committee Expenses, \$7,006
- Administrative Expense, \$2,080

Total to date: \$41,244

Analysis and Conclusions

Introduction

The members of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee met with our consultant, David Roozen, to analyze the data from the interview process. From the data we easily identified four major concerns: 1) **Visioning**, 2) **Planning**, 3) **Priorities**, and 4) **Accountability/Authority**. (These had emerged clearly in our Interim Report [*see Appendix A*] and were reconfirmed by the final analysis of all the data.) In other words, respondents to our interviews/surveys believe the following are unclear:

- 1) Who, by role, has responsibility for overall **visioning** and **planning** for the UCC?
- 2) Who has the **authority** to make hard choices and set clear **priorities** for **the total mission of the church**?

In order to put these stated concerns into perspective, we turned to the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ to discern where the responsibility for **visioning**, **planning**, and for **setting priorities** lie. We looked to these documents to better understand the lines of **authority** and **accountability** within the new structure of the national setting of the church.

After lengthy and detailed examination of the Constitution and Bylaws, we came to the conclusion that it is impossible to draw clear lines of responsibility and accountability for **visioning**, **planning**, and **setting priorities**. We tried to draw a flow chart, but found it to be an impossible task.

This led us to the conclusion that the problem does not lie with the Executive Council, the Collegium of Officers or the General Minister and President. The problem lies with the Constitution and Bylaws. We are profoundly sympathetic with the architects of the Constitution and Bylaws, however, and we understand - as did the architects - that these need to be "lived into" in order to be tested. We feel that, these three years later, they have been tested and, in a few key areas, could and should be adjusted. We make these observations even as we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the restructure. There is much that is right and good about the restructure [*see Interim Report, Appendix A*].

We analyzed the sections of the Constitution and Bylaws which define the powers and outline the responsibilities of the Executive Council, the Collegium of Officers, the General Minister and President, the Office of General Ministries, the other Covenanted Ministries, and the Mission Planning Council. We created our own version of *Gospel Parallels* - that is, our own *Constitution and Bylaws Parallels*. We took those persons and bodies with major responsibility and placed them side-by-side. We then tried to compare the responsibilities, as described in the Constitution and Bylaws, of each of these bodies for **visioning**, **planning**, **setting priorities**, and **accountability** for and to each other, as well as accountability for and to the whole church. We discovered that there is considerable confusion, ambiguity, over-lapping, inconsistencies, and redundancy among these defined responsibilities in terms of **visioning**, **planning**, and **setting priorities**. Additionally, there is a lack of clarity in terms of who is **accountable** to whom for these functions.

As an example, we draw attention to the responsibilities of these major bodies/persons as described in the UCC's Constitution and Bylaws.

Compare this:

...the Collegium of Officers is responsible for providing leadership for the mission programming of the United Church of Christ and for the implementation of General Synod Actions. (p. 3.8)

With this:

The purpose and mission of the Office of General Ministries shall be to ... facilitate the visioning, planning, coordination, and implementation of the total mission of the United Church of Christ. (p. 12.64)

With this:

The General Minister and President ... is responsible for guiding the development of envisioning and planning that will enable the United Church of Christ to be more effective in God's mission. (p. 30.209)

With this:

The Mission Planning Council is responsible for the coordination and correlation of mission and purpose ...

With this:

The General Synod and its Executive Council shall consider the work of all Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries. It shall also correlate their work ... (p. 10.56)

After laying out the various responsibilities of the major bodies of the UCC as described in the Constitution and Bylaws, our heads were swimming with soft verbs: correlate, guide, facilitate, consider, coordinate, enable, and provide leadership. We were reminded of Dante's opening lines in the first book of *The Divine Comedy*:

In the middle of the journey of our life
I came to myself within a dark wood
Where the straight way was lost.
(*Inferno*, Canto I)

As we sought clarity and accountability in our Constitution and Bylaws, we experienced a dark wood. The straight way was lost to us.

Similarly, we tried to get a sense of who is responsible and/or accountable to whom. One example is the way the Constitution and Bylaws describe the internal relationships of the Collegium of Officers. The General Minister and President is described variously as *the presiding officer*, a *peer* of the other officers, and the *supervisor* of the Associate General Minister: three in one!

Compare this:

The General Minister and President is the spiritual leader and pastor, the Minister of the United Church of Christ; the chief executive officer of the General Synod ...the presiding officer of the Collegium of Officers. (p.30.209)

With this:

The Collegium of Officers. Composed of the Officers of the United Church of Christ meeting as peers (p. 3.8)

With this:

Through the General Minister and President, the Associate General Minister will be accountable to the General Synod and its Executive Council ... (p. 31.212)

Although there are some statements on authority and accountability, we were unable to create a flow chart that clearly outlines the process for **visioning, planning, setting priorities and accountability**.

Despite this, we believe it is the intent of the Constitution and Bylaws, to lodge the ultimate responsibility for the total mission and priorities of the United Church of Christ with the General Synod and its Executive Council.

“The General Synod and its Executive Council shall consider the work of all Covenanted, Affiliated, and Associated Ministries. It shall also correlate their work, publicity and promotion, preventing duplication and effecting economies of administration, so as to secure maximum effectiveness and efficiency through careful stewardship of personnel and financial resources. Due protection shall be given to all trust funds, including pension funds.”
(Paragraph 56, *the Constitution of the United Church of Christ, page 10, 2001 edition*)

It is our assessment that the Executive Council has not, since the inception of the new structure, exercised the authority and responsibility given to it by the Constitution and Bylaws. We believe this to be for a number of reasons that each contributed in part:

- 1) The UCC has a historical and current resistance to, and suspicion of, centralized authority.
- 2) Further, it is widely perceived that the Executive Council is not duly representative of the Covenanted Ministries boards, with the notable exception of the Office for General Ministries.
- 3) Covenanted Ministries boards have often felt tension between historic mandates and their service to the total mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ. The situation is fraught with tension, territorialism and, last but not least, funding. We believe it is the role of the Executive Council, as assigned by the Constitution and Bylaws, to act as referee when there are competing claims for money and priorities, and to require of the different settings of the church that they all work together toward commonly agreed priorities.
- 4) Furthermore, at the inception of the new structure, the Executive Council, like the other newly created bodies in the national setting, was struggling to identify its role and did not give

direction to the Collegium, for whom it has the responsibility of oversight and support. (*Article III, Paragraph 226 of the Bylaws of the United Church of Christ, page 36, 2001 edition*);

- 5) Consequently, in those first months of the new structure, the work of carrying on the mission of the United Church of Christ was left to the Collegium. There was simply no one else to oversee the work of the church in its national setting much less take the responsibility for **visioning, planning, and setting priorities**. In addition to the task of managing the whole, the individual members of the Collegium were and are accountable to their respective ministries. Regrettably, but humanly, these sometimes represent competing claims.
- 6) Last but not least, the Constitution and Bylaws fail to give clear, unambiguous authority to the Executive Council for this most essential and urgent task.

We commend the members of the Collegium for the monumental task that they assumed during the first year of the new structure. We are also grateful for the wisdom of the Transition Coordination Committee for scheduling an evaluation of the new structure in the third year of operation. This evaluation is providing the church in its national setting a time to “step back” and look at what is working and what is not.

Summary Conclusion

The Restructure Evaluations Oversight Committee has come to the conclusion that much of what is perceived as not working in the new structure of the national setting of the church lies in **the lack of clearly defined lines of authority and accountability for visioning, planning, and setting priorities in the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ**. After careful reading of these documents, we believe it could be reasonably argued that no one entity or person has authority to lead the total mission of the church. This is why, we believe, it has been so hard to pin down the problem. It also explains why the leadership has been engaged in circular arguments about whose fault it is that no one seems to be in charge.

On the other hand, it would be unreasonable to expect these documents to have worked perfectly without first living into the new structure. The Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ often refer to covenant and covenanted relationships, but rarely refer to accountability to the covenant. Theologically, covenant implies accountability. Without accountability there can be no covenant relationship. It is to that end that the Restructure Evaluations Oversight Committee offers the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1. Constitution and Bylaws Select Committee: The committee recommends that the Executive Council create a Constitution and Bylaws Select Committee to recommend revisions in the Constitution and Bylaws in order to define clearly the lines of responsibility, accountability, and authority within the structure of the national setting of the Church and that these lines of responsibility, accountability, and authority be written in a manner that is easily understood. The responsibility for the process of visioning, planning, and setting priorities in the national setting of the Church must also be clearly defined and easily understood. This committee should give attention to the inconsistencies and confusion in language used to describe the responsibilities of the various Officers of the Church, (particularly to the office of General Minister and President) the Covenanted Ministries Boards, the Mission Planning Council, the Executive Council, and the General Synod.

Note: The recommendations that follow reflect the need for defining clearly lines of responsibility, accountability, and authority within the structure of the national setting of the Church.

2. Executive Council:

- a. The Committee recommends that the composition of the Executive Council be redefined to be more fairly representative of the membership of the Boards of Directors of the Covenanted Ministries. This would mean a reduction in representatives from members of the Board of Directors of the Office of General Ministries and an increase in representatives from the other three Covenanted Ministries Boards.
- b. The committee recommends that the Executive Council define, for itself and for the Collegium of Officers, what it means for the Executive Council to provide oversight for the work of the Collegium of Officers.
- c. The committee recommends that the Executive Council assert its constitutional responsibility and authority for being the focal point for decision-making, overall planning, evaluation and budgeting for the church in its national setting.

3. Mission Planning Council: The committee recommends that the Mission Planning Council meet four to six times a year and that these meetings include at least two representatives from the Council of Conference Ministers. The Mission Planning Council would then recommend to the Executive Council, through the General Minister and President, the priorities for the total mission of the Church for each biennium. The Executive Council would subsequently direct the Collegium of Officers to implement the priorities to be addressed.

4. General Minister and President: The data from the interviews clearly indicates that there is a need for the office of General Minister and President to be strengthened relative to the other Officers of the Church. It is widely perceived that the consensual decision making process used by the Collegium of Officers does not always serve the interest of the whole church.

- a. Therefore, the committee recommends:
 1. that the Executive Council recognize and support the General Minister and President's constitutional authority as presiding officer of the Collegium of Officers in the decision making processes of the Collegium;
 2. that the Executive Council recognize and support the General Minister and President's responsibility for guiding the Collegium of Officers in visioning and planning to enable the effective mission of the whole Church; and
 3. that the General Minister and President be responsible for reporting the work of the Collegium of Officers to the Executive Council.
- b. The committee recommends creating a position of Executive to the General Minister and President (*to be hired for a period of three years*) to serve as staff to the Executive Council and as staff to the Mission Planning Council. This person must have proven organizational, visioning, and planning skills. He or she would give particular attention to the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ in identifying and communicating the process for visioning, planning, and setting priorities within the structure of the national setting of the United Church of Christ.

5. Building Partnerships: The data points to the need for developing partnerships across the lines of Covenanted Ministries, with Conferences, and with Local Churches. The Constitution states that responsibility for building these partnerships lies with the Collegium of Officers. When the Executive Council and the Mission Planning Council are functioning as envisioned by the architects of the new structure, it will relieve some of the burden currently borne by the Collegium of Officers, and enable them to focus more attention on building relationships, partnerships and cooperation as described in the Constitution and Bylaws.

The committee recommends that the Collegium of Officers give priority to developing cooperation and partnership among the Covenanted Ministries, the Conferences, and the Local Churches.

Light and Hope

Dante's Virgil finds himself in a dark wood where the straight way is lost. Yet with guidance, faith and hope he climbs out of the dark wood. The interviews and surveys we conducted provide ample evidence that there is much that is good and right about the United Church of Christ and our new structure. Our data compiler and interpreter, Adair Lummis, spoke with awe and encouragement about what she had seen and heard. As she, too, used the metaphor of a wood, we end our report with her concluding *Postscript*:

"The restructuring of the UCC national church offices and ministries has been a dramatic organizational innovation. It has also been traumatic when it does not meet the hopes of those who planned it, or who can no longer stay with it. Many in the UCC as well as in other denominations have much to learn from what UCC officers, executives, team leaders, board members, staff and others have attempted and experienced in the last three years. A number interviewed noted that, although more efforts to improve meeting all five hopes will be needed

in the coming years, changing organizational cultures to this extent takes time, and much has been accomplished.

"Immersing myself in these extraordinary interviews over the last month -- some very upbeat, some angry or disappointed, and many with deep insights as well as cutting remarks -- I became as interested as the Committee to find out what the forest would look like once the 'numbers' were tabulated. It may need some brush cleaned out, but to me it looks quite alive and growing!"

To which we, the undersigned, say, 'Amen'.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Aguilar Co-Chair and Executive Council
Winston Baldwin Co-Chair and Chairperson of the Executive Council
Vicki Beckman Wider Church Ministries
Gary Chapman Justice and Witness Ministries
Sharon MacArthur Office of General Ministries
Ron Ruggles, Sr. Local Church Ministries
Richard O. Sparrow Parish Life and Leadership
Nancy S. Taylor Council of Conference Ministers

List of appendices:

- A. Report on action taken by the Executive Council, October 15-17
- B. Report for the UCC Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee
- C. Numerical Results for the UCC Total Sample

Appendix A

Interim Report, October 2003

REOC Presentation at the Joint Board Meeting in Atlanta October, 2003

GOD IS STILL SPEAKING, ABOUT OUR RESTRUCTURE

Background, Purpose and Scope. The church's Transition Coordinating Committee, responsible for implementing the restructure of the national setting of the United Church of Christ, requested that an evaluation be carried out in the third year of the new structure's operation. That request was affirmed by the Executive Council at its April 2002 meeting.

This affirmation resulted in the formation of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee, consisting of: Liz Aguilar and Winston Baldwin – representing the Executive Council; Sharon MacArthur – representing the Office of General Ministries Board; Vicki Beckman – representing the Wider Church Ministries Board; Ron Ruggles – representing the Local Church Ministries Board; Gary Chapman – representing the Justice and Witness Ministries Board; Nancy Taylor – representing the Council of Conference Ministers; Sheila Kelly and Dick Sparrow – serving as Staff to the restructure Evaluation Committee.

The committee's charge was to oversee the evaluation of the ***new structure***. This was not to be an evaluation of people or their job performance. The charge was to ask: is the structure consistent with the initial vision; is it functioning effectively; and, does it demonstrate good stewardship of financial resources?

In its initial proposal to the Executive Council in March of 2003, the Committee recommended that interviews/soundings be conducted with National Staff; Covenanted Ministries Boards of Directors; Executive Council Members; Conference Ministers; Associate Conference Ministers; Seminary Presidents; Pension Board Executive Vice President; United Church Foundation Executive Vice President; Insurance Board Executive Director; CHHSM Executive Director; and representatives from CAIM; COREM; CHM; MRSEJ; PAAM; UBC; LGBT Coalition; Disabilities Ministries; Council of Theological Education; Council for Higher Education; Council for Ecumenism; the Historical Societies; Associations and local churches.

Estimated costs, to be shared equally by the Covenanted Ministries, were projected at \$40,000. The Executive Council approved the estimated funding and scope of interviews, with the exception of associations and local churches.

An early decision of the committee was to contract with David Roozen, author, sociologist and professor at Hartford Seminary, to consult with us around process formation, interview questions and data analysis. His experience and recommendations have been invaluable in our work.

Professional interviewers would be engaged to conduct all face to face interviews and those gatherings would be held off-site. Interviews would be transcribed by non-UCC personnel.

Expectations of the Restructure. As the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee worked on a design for its mandate, the committee reviewed a multitude of documents used over the years in the restructuring process. We soon were identifying and calling "hopes" several stated objectives of the restructuring. These hopes became the framework for our interview model. In review, they are:

6. The hope that the new structure would create a culture of cooperation and collaboration across the UCC, and that there would be equity among the partners. The cooperation would be among the Collegium of Officers, among staff and directors of the Covenanted Ministries, between the Covenanted Ministries and the Conferences, and between the Covenanted Ministries and local churches.
7. The hope that there would be coordination of ministry at the National Setting; that there would be strategic planning and visioning; that the leadership would engage the whole church in shaping mission mandates.
8. The hope that there would be accountability to and for the whole church.

9. The hope that the restructure would create a simpler, more integrated structure that reduced redundancy among positions, that streamlined financial accounting practices, and that generated new sources of funding.
10. The hope that the new structure would foster the development of the United Church of Christ as a multi-cultural, multi-racial, open, affirming, and accessible church.

Timeline and Progress. The REOC first met by conference call on February 7, 2003 and has had met twice in person since that date – interspersed by numerous conference calls.

The interviews have taken two forms:

4. Individual, one-on-one interviews, conducted by Zanglin and Associates, professional interviewers with no connection to the United Church of Christ. Individuals of ethnic and racial diversities have had the opportunity to be interviewed by persons with whom they are comfortable and whom they feel will hear their answers accurately.
5. Group Soundings, of ten to twelve people, conducted by professional interviewers or, in some settings, by the group itself following prepared interview questions.

As of this date, the following interviews have been held:

- all six officers of the Church and the Executives of the Pension Boards, United Church Foundation, Council for Health and Human Services Ministries and Insurance Board
- all Team Leaders
- 90% of the Staff of the Covenanted Ministries
- Five UCC Seminary Presidents
- Eight Representatives of Groups with a seat on the Executive Council
- 108 Members of the Boards of Directors of the Office of General Ministries, Local Church Ministries and Wider Church Ministries

Additionally, members of the Board of Directors of Justice and Witness Ministries were sent a mailed version of the restructure interview, as were 123 Conference and Association personnel.

As of the end of March, transcriptions were completed of interviews with all Boards of Directors, the Officers and Executives of other Agencies, most Team Leaders, most Seminary Presidents, most Representatives of Groups with a seat on the Executive Council and approximately half of the interviews with staff of the Covenanted Ministries.

All transcriptions, as well as the completed mailed versions of the survey, will be systematically analyzed over the course of the next six months.

Out of a projected budget of \$40,000, \$18,928.42 has been expended to date. The expenditures include portions of the contract with David Roozen, Zanglin and Associates, two face to face meetings, numerous conference calls and half the cost of transcriptions.

The Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee will present a final report and recommendations to the Executive Council and the Boards of Directors of the Covenanted Ministries in October of this year.

Emerging Themes based on the Hopes for Restructure: This is what we are hearing, so far. It is imperative that we understand that not all the voices have been heard. It might help to imagine this report as "early returns" on an election night. Certain precincts - with particular personalities and perspectives - have reported in so far. When all the returns are in and everything has been tallied, it is possible that these general/emerging themes will change.

1. Cooperation among the Covenanted Ministries, local churches, Conferences and other partners.

Some good news: There is strong evidence in interviews with various groups of participants that cooperation across Covenanted Ministries is taking place to a much greater degree in the new structure. The various Tables that have been created in recent years are often cited as examples of this. There is also evidence that greater cooperation is taking place between the Covenanted Ministries and Conferences. The results to date suggest that the UCC's strong commitment to ecumenical partnerships have continued in the new structure, although financial issues are a concern.

Mixed news: The assessment of connections between local churches and the Covenanted Ministries is far more mixed, with some participants perceiving that there is greater cooperation, particularly in the use of resources from the Covenanted Ministries, than in the past, while many others feel there has been no change in these relationships. (*It is important to note that, at the direction of the Executive Council, we did not seek input from local churches in this process of evaluation. Therefore, as we consider the emerging themes around cooperation among the different settings of the UCC, we do so with this caveat: the voice/perspective of the local church is missing.*)

Concerns: Cooperation among the Boards of the various Covenanted Ministries was an area where participants - especially Board Members themselves - felt much more needs to be done. The hope that cooperation and sharing of ideas would lead to creative ideas and programming, found little support in the responses to date.

2. Mission Coordination/Strategic Planning and Visioning

Good news: The cooperation of the five Officers to date in the new structure was described as remarkable in many of the interviews.

Mixed news: a number of participants cited The Still Speaking Initiative as an example of a plan/vision in the new structure that involves the whole church, but some of these same participants were quick to point out that the Initiative is happening because of the ideas, personality and perseverance of specific individuals.

Concerns: There were more negative comments about the Hope that in the new structure there would be coordination of Covenanted Ministries, strategic planning and visioning as a national setting (as opposed to strategic planning within each Covenanted Ministry) than on any other area of evaluation. Most participants who addressed this issue believe there has been a failure in this regard and the verbatim comments indicate that there is enormous frustration and disappointment that this has not happened. Many believe the structure of 4 autonomous incorporated bodies makes such coordination virtually impossible, and where it has occurred, many respondents believe it has been due to the initiative of individuals who called together groups of colleagues with similar interests from the four Covenanted Ministries, thus enabling coordination to occur in spite of the structure. The Mission Planning Council, one of the topics covered in this area of the evaluation, was seen as an absolute failure. Respondents perceive that the Collegium should have a central role in Mission Coordination, Strategic Planning and Vision. The Collegium's consensus model, however, was seen as inefficient and time-consuming. The fact or perception that each member of the Collegium has veto power over initiatives and that each Officer has dual responsibilities (sometimes referred to as "two masters") - to their respective Covenanted Ministry board and to the whole Church - interferes with their ability to craft a common vision and action plan for the Church. (Again, it is important to note that while many judge that the Collegium model is not working, there is high regard and appreciation for the individual members of the Collegium.)

3. Accountability:

This generated both extremely positive and extremely negative reactions from participants, depending on the particular kind of accountability that was being addressed.

Good news: In terms of financial accountability, there were numerous comments that over the course of the last three years, and especially in recent months, financial reporting has vastly improved and that has made it easier to measure financial accountability.

Concerns: On the other hand, there were strong negative comments that in the current structure nobody is in charge, making it impossible to hold people accountable. The issue of the Role of the General Minister and President was a topic discussed here. There were some strong reactions on this issue, with significant numbers of participants believing the Office of the General Minister and President has not been strengthened in the new structure but that it needs to be. The difficulties and perceived failure of the Collegium model was also mentioned with respect to accountability (as well as in the previous section concerning mission coordination, strategic planning, and visioning). The Collegium have been placed in an impossible situation: equally accountable to their own Covenanted Ministry and to a vision for the whole Church. It is important to emphasize that respondents do not blame the individual members of the Collegium. Rather, it is the "model" of the Collegium, that is perceived to be at fault.

4. More Efficient, Effective Staffing and Financing:

Good news: On the issue of more efficient staffing and elimination of redundancy, respondents believe there has been progress. The establishment of a uniform personnel policy was cited as a significant accomplishment. Respondents also believe financial services have become more streamlined.

Mixed news: A number of respondents questioned the need for three Treasurers. Respondents do not believe new sources of income have been achieved since restructure, but a number of these were hopeful that new financial committees would help in that regard. Some participants felt that have gained important things about staffing since 2000 and that some issues need to be addressed given what has been learned. Participants pointed out that it was impossible to know in 2000 how new staffing configurations would work, and that now that we have lived into the new structure it is obvious to them that some staff positions are redundant and other, new staff positions need to be established in light of what is currently needed.

5. Being a Diverse/Inclusive Church:

Good news: The issue of being a more multi-cultural, multi-racial, open and affirming church accessible to all was in general regarded as positive in the national setting. The composition of staff at the national offices and the representatives of the church that meet in General Synod were referred to over and over again as an indication that the church has made progress here.

The work of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee continues!

There are transcriptions to be completed, large amounts of input data to be analyzed and a final report with any recommendations prepared for the October board meetings.

At this juncture, we are grateful for the immense trust exhibited for this process by all who have been interviewed. Most persons were more honest and vulnerable than we had dared hope.

We are grateful to witness the commitment all participants have for their ministries and responsibilities in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.

We are grateful for the consultant who purchased a sheep through Heifer Project International in recognition of the important work this committee is doing.

And finally, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve the church as members of the Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee.

This we believe: God is still speaking . . . about our restructure.

The Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee

Winston Baldwin	Liz Aguilar	Sharon MacArthur
Vicki Beckman	Ron Rubbles	Gary Chapman
Nancy Taylor	Sheila Kelly	Dick Sparrow

Appendix B

Report for the UCC Restructure Evaluation Oversight Committee

September 14, 2004

REPORT

for

THE UCC RESTRUCTURE EVALUATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

By
Adair T. Lummis

FOREWORD & METHODOLOGY

After Sheila Kelly's death in late June at the request of Edith Guffey and in consultation with Dick Sparrow, I agreed in early July to analyze the great amount of material on UCC restructure gathered from the fall of 2003 through the Spring of 2004, and write a draft report by this date. The material I received consisted of the Interim Report, the general interview guide/questionnaire used, thousands of pages of transcribed in-depth interviews and focus groups, as well as some open-ended surveys sent to some board members and conference ministers.

For this draft report, Dick Sparrow asked that I give priority to getting an assessment of the prevalence of different responses to the five "Hope" questions on restructure. In approaching this task, I set up an initial code for interview/focus group transcripts, adding to the code as new categories emerged, and redoing some of the first interviews coding on completion of the last group. This process allowed me to enter code numbers in a data base for counts and analysis. This report should be read in conjunction with the ***Numerical Results for Total Sample***, which provides a fairly accurate assessment of the prevalence of different responses.

Coding, Cautions and Comments: As an experienced interviewer, I affirm that these are very skillfully done individual interviews and focus groups. There are some cautions and issues to note for analyses of this material, however:

- Unlike check-off surveys where the respondent indicates how positive or negative he or she feels about an issue, in coding this kind of rich interview material, it is the coder's judgment (i.e. mine) that is pivotal in how positive or negative a response is coded. I did my best in the time we had.
- Those interviewed do not necessarily stick to the question framework the interviewer uses. Answers to questions asked or issues of interest probed, can pop up anywhere in the interview or focus group. I hope I caught most of these answers, wherever located in the transcript.
- Each focus group interview (regardless of how many people were in the group) are counted as one unit (i.e. the same as one individual interview) in the ***Numerical Results for Total Sample***. In these focus group transcripts it is impossible to tell which individual made what responses and often how many individuals were in the focus group.

- Several of the taped interviews did not come out well enough for whole sections to be heard well enough for the transcriptionist to type, and two had so many gaps they are not included in the analysis.
- Even in the majority of fully-transcribed interviews, a number of questions asked were not answered by most. Because of the length of the interview, a decision appeared to have been made for some individuals and groups to be asked question concerning either Hope 4 or Hope 5, but not both. Even when questions were asked by the interviewer, sometimes the person or group queried did not feel either (1) competent to answer, or (2) felt free enough to answer. In cases where the question was either not asked by the interviewer or unanswered (directly or indirectly) by those interviewed, they were not included on “the usable answers” in the *Numerical Results for Total Sample* on the particular question. Some interviews could not be transcribed in certain places from the tapes or so sparsely that questions that may have been answered could not be coded.
- It is only on questions which a majority of individual/focus groups answered (i.e. close to a 100 or over) that responses by different clusters of respondents on the *Numerical Results for Total Sample* are given. Otherwise, the clusters would have too few responding in each to make meaningful distinctions. For reasons of confidentiality and validity, five clusters which contained at least a total possible number of 10 different individuals/groups were made. These group clusters are as follows:
 - Collegium and executives of covenanted ministries (n=12)
 - team leaders of covenanted ministries (n =15)
 - staff of the covenanted ministries (n=72),
 - seminary presidents, representatives with a seat on Executive Council, and members of the boards of directors of the covenanted ministries (n=26)
 - conference ministers (n=18).
- There are many insightful comments and good quotes contained in these transcripts. In the numerical coding of each interview/focus group/survey, an indication was made for transcripts which contained a good insight, comment on one of the questions. Although time constraints will not allow much analysis and inclusion of these for this first report, these comments and insights are accessible for further analyses and writing on areas in which the Committee is particularly interested.

I. **HOPE 1. FOR COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

A. **With Local Churches**

Whether or not congregations find the national church more accessible and understandable now than several years ago is hard to ascertain. However, there have been a number of new attempts to connect the national church with local churches. A slight majority of the total sample does feel that accessibility has at least probably improved. A much larger majority affirms that the national church level is making a substantial effort to respond to local churches.

Various new or revised structures and programs were named which have been developed to increase the accessibility and responsiveness of the national church to local congregations.¹ Most frequently mentioned were the UCC website, the streamlined monthly mailing to local churches, the efforts of national staff to visit and consult with individual congregations, and national church care in hosting local church tours and holding educational events for different constituencies in the Cleveland offices.

National church staffs of covenanted ministries are predominantly affirmative in their assessments of how responsive and accessible the national church is now to local congregations. This is possibly because they are the most involved in seeing that this happens in the daily work, and know how much more is being done now than previously...

The national church's being generally accessible and responsive to local churches, however, does not necessarily lead to its achieving a better connection and coordination with its congregations. A minority of the total sample sees little if any improvement in connection between local churches and the national church. Those with the most negative views of improvement here are not only the conference ministers but also the officers and ministry executives of the church. Perusal of the kinds of comments made indicate that this is not because National church officials and staff executives are putting forth little effort to connect with congregations, on the contrary, but rather for three other reasons:

- (a) The necessity of cutting funds on the national funds level means that there is less money to give to local churches and less staff to be consultants to each individually. In illustration:

Conference minister: "It is hard to see how (greater connection)/cooperation is really viable, given the seriously reduced national resources.

- (b) The concurrent collapse of the 13 instrumentality boards into four boards means fewer board members overall to relate to local churches and conferences. In illustration:

- Team Leader: "We are working more closely with board members to connect better with the congregation that they are members of - but there are far fewer board members now."
- Conference minister: The reduction in representation on national boards is a problem. It has reduced the number of opportunities for direct experience from among the members of our conference and associations. The fewer contacts we have, the more separated people feel.

- (c) The national church value priority on diversity and inclusiveness, particularly of homosexuals, has angered more conservative congregations. In illustration:

- Bd. Member: "There is still not enough connection between the local churches and the conference, between local churches and the national. I am very unsure of my role in all of this, what is expected of me, and what I can do to bring awareness, information and motivation to local churches from the national setting. What I have

¹ See page 3, # 4 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

learned since joining the board is that many churches in our conference not only do not have any connection to national, they don't want to have any connection."

- Conference minister: "I think the national setting of the church is trying hard to relate to local churches, but in my neck of the woods churches are less connected than they have ever been. Many of our churches are more conservative and write off much of what the national church...does. I do not see this changing, only getting worse."

One idea for bettering the connection between the national church and local congregations in the planning stage, was described as follows:

- National staff: "What we ended up proposing, and the Executive Council has affirmed the general direction, is that we go out and put in place five regional marketers who essentially go out and strengthen the relationship between the local pastor and denomination."

B. With Conferences

A substantial majority of the total sample saw an improved or fairly well functioning relationship now between the national church and the conferences. There are a number of new or strengthened policies and programs that were mentioned², particularly: national church assistance in providing program resources to conferences and partnership in new church starts; taking care to consult now (usually) with conference ministers before entering conferences and issuing national policy statements; having conference ministers and/or representatives on each national board; and having one person (Cope) in the office of the president to relate to conferences. Perhaps as a consequence of these developments, a strong majority who expressed an opinion on the subject, believed the conferences role in planning on the national church level is better now than formerly..

A number of those interviewed (24) voiced their strong conviction that in order to better connect with more congregations, the national church needed to work mainly through the conference. Even though others (19) believed that approaches and responses to individual local churches should continue and expand, they would concur that the conference offices and staff are also a main avenue to congregations.

Conference ministers, unfortunately, are least likely as a group to believe that either the cooperation between the national level and conferences is better now or that conferences have a better role in planning on the national level. National church restructuring could not realistically extend to restructuring the conferences. A number of issues were named as potential obstacles in cooperative planning between conferences and the national church³, including poor coordination between national ministries and conferences in social policy areas and the fact that conference representatives on boards do not necessarily communicate well with their own conference or representatives from other conferences.

² See page 4, # 3 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

³ See page 5, # 5 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

At the same time, these data also indicate that conference ministers are divided in their opinions of the national church, as illustrated in comments made by the following four conference ministers and associate ministers about national church inclusion of conferences in planning for the whole church:.

More negative:

- We truly need to begin to see that conference ministers are national staff also. If we do not shape ourselves this way soon, and act our way into this reality, the cooperation dreamed of in the new structure won't be realized...Until conferences are seen as vital to this whole process we will continue to foster a *we/them* environment in which we strive to coordinate ministry.
- Throughout restructuring and the current evaluation of restructuring, the role, place, etc. of the conferences appear to be omitted...They should be seen as a significant component in the UCC as it exists beyond the local church. The conferences are the primary place of interaction with local churches and pastors ...and are the major source of OCWM support for the good of the whole.

More positive

- Conferences/associations indeed do have a role in mission and program planning at the national setting...in the very act of initiating ideas that can be communicated to the national setting, as well as responding to requests from national for critique and input into draft proposals.
- I strongly supported the efforts to build ...the new structure ...The new structure has eliminated some of the overlapping national staff responsibilities, simplifying our tasks in accessing assistance. Denominational partners have expressed envy at our conference/national relationships.

C. Within the Collegium

The functioning of the Collegium is somewhat mysterious to many. Though three-fourths of those interviewed who had some impression of the Collegium assume it is working at least fairly well, at the same time a majority had mild to strong reservations.⁴ The grouping which has the most positive impression of the Collegium are the officers, the other national church executives and ministry board members. Those with the greatest reservations about how well the Collegium is functioning are predominantly team leaders and conference ministers.

Most of the reservations about the Collegium have nothing to do with individuals on it; on the contrary these five leaders are highly respected. This very fact, however, raises some apprehensions about the future wellness of the Collegium if current officers are replaced by others who are not so outstanding. The dual roles of some as Collegium members and executives of one of the covenanted ministries, some feel (about 15) have occasioned conflicts of interest in these officers' making decisions for the whole church. However, these are not the major sources of concerns about well the Collegium is functioning.

⁴ See page 5, # C.1 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

The Collegium's structural value on consensual decision-making within this leadership team is the primary cause of ambivalence, reservations, and criticism expressed about its effectiveness. The Collegium's model of consensual decision-making received quite disparate assessments of its value by over a third of the total sample, but almost all expressed some concerns.⁵ This model exemplifies an ideal of the UCC restructuring, with a top leadership team of five making major decision and no one person in charge. This is a source of some pride, e.g.:

- It is a wonderful vision to have the coordination of ministry be so collegial. No other denomination is trying to do that because it has been so difficult to do....but...

The “buts” expressed by this interviewee and many others are because this vision it is too difficult for UCC to effectively implement as well in its most ideal form. Even those who affirm this model are cognizant of the fact that others may not understand the absence of one person in charge or appreciate the time it takes to reach a decision amenable to all. It is the apparent inability of the Collegium to make hard but necessary decisions in timely way that is the source of most criticism.

Yet the Collegium is generally seen in a positive light. This is not only because the members of the Collegium are competent and upstanding individuals, but also because the Collegium is so superior to the old system it replaced.

The following interview quotes are illustrative of these points made by many:

Team Leaders and Staff:

- My sense is that the Collegium consists of five incredibly bright, gifted passionate persons who are integral to our life. But I am not convinced that the Collegium members have been able or are talking about the really tough issues that tend to separate us in the national setting.
- How the Collegium operates and does its business is a mystery to the rest of us. ..It is very difficult to get any decision out of the whole Collegium because you've got five people serving four different masters, four different boards. So that tends to paralyze them and the Church as a whole....I think basically the concept is unworkable. There is no single leader, and so there is no ultimate accountability as to who is ultimately responsible. ..Because of that we don't have a denomination-wide mission plan, or mission statement, or strategic plan.
- This is one of the places where I think our Officers are doing a really good job with each other and get blamed for something that is not their fault. I think they are trying really hard with others not to be territorial. ..They get blamed for what the structure causes; that's wrong. They can stand on their heads, but it isn't going to make a bit of difference until the structure changes – imbalance of funds and who sets the initiative and direction....We are not in an autocratic system, so it couldn't happen autocratically anyway. It would have to happen in collaboration. But the frustration on the part of many of my colleagues that I hear voiced so many times is: you can't make any damn decisions because anybody's concerns among those five

⁵ See page 6, # 2 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

could override anybody else's concerns. The next thing you know, you don't have unanimity, and the decision is never made. It is shelved. Yeah, over and over and over again.

Board Members/Conference Ministers

- There has to be some sense of accountability that can help the Collegium function...other than just consensus. We can't come to consensus about a strategic plan, therefore we don't have one....It's that frustration that I feel.
- I am extremely impressed with the ministry of John Thomas. I think he does the best he can under the present structure. However ...the current structure of the Collegium blocks leadership rather than fuels it. In an attempt to reign in the totally independent leaders in the previous structure, who led but never collaboratively, we have created a structure where everyone has to be so damn collaborative that there can be no leadership unless everyone on the team agrees. That requirement makes it difficult to order lunch, never mind lead a church....Having said all this....the new structure is significantly better and more just with all its problems than the old....Gone is the infighting between instrumentalities and the total lack of cooperation...The Collegium, as unwieldy as it is, is much, much better than anything we had before.

D. Within and Between the Covenanted Ministries

Although the kingdom has not yet arrived in regard to cooperative work within and between units and boards of the Covenanted Ministries, still collaboration and communication are generally perceived as better within the new structure.⁶ Over three-fourths of those interviewed assessed the cooperation among Ministries as working at least fairly well. More dysfunction and blocks to cooperation was perceived by the team leaders interviewed,⁷ possibly because they have responsibilities for and are evaluated on how well they carry out program coordination.

It should also be recalled that many were not working for the national church before the new structure was implemented, reducing the thirteen instrumentalities to four boards. Those with this longer time perspective are more likely to have brought up the fact that the present structure of four boards works at least somewhat better.⁸

Cooperation and setting priorities within each Ministry is generally considered working considerably better than across Ministries, according to those who have enough knowledge to attempt to answer this question (about a third of the sample) While over three-fourths (78%) thought cooperation and setting priorities was at least done fairly well within their own Ministry, under a fourth (22%) believed this was true between and across different Ministries.⁹ Turf issues between Ministries continue into the present structure. Since Ministries retain a great measure of independence, cooperation is problematic when funds are tight and the Ministry board is trying to fulfill its mandate.

⁶ See page 6, D.1 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*.

⁷ See page 7, top of page of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*.

⁸ See page 7, # 2 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

⁹ See page 7, # 4 and page 8, # 5 of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

Even within Ministries there were a few problems reported with the boards or between board and staff members. Basically, board members are volunteers and board members only meet together several times a year at the most. It takes a year, as several indicated, before new board members understand the Ministry and/or grasp what their role should be as board members.

Ministry teams within Ministries also are seen by those on them as generally working very well. Problems in coordination can arise even within a team, but more often such problems occur when the team leaders within a Ministry try to collaborate. Problems that arose were attributed mainly to trust and turf issues and personality clashes, exacerbated by work overloads and insufficient time to meet under the pressure of competing demands.¹⁰

The tables across Ministries in particular areas, established to allow those with somewhat similar job foci to share ideas, are fairly positively viewed by the majority of their participants. Similar problems afflicting team leaders cooperating within ministries, however, can affect cross-ministry tables – such as turf, time, and personalities.¹¹ Generally, tables which have a very clear focus and meet with regularity (but not too frequently) are working better than those tables which meet infrequently with little clarity as to what are common issues. One of the more common themes raised in interviews is the need for some standards about how many tables should be established, how many tables individual staff and team leaders should be part of, and how many persons from each ministry should go to one table. Tables can become too much of a good thing, as illustrated in the remarks by three team leaders:

1. I convene the _ Table, but I have no authority over the people who come, except the people in my own office. They can respond or not respond to tasks as they may be assigned, as they choose. But the Table has been a way for people to get together and share concerns and ideas. (gives examples of their successful ideas and projects)...Tables are a way that the new structure has given rise to cross-ministry cooperation, but I think those examples are less frequent than we would have hoped.
2. Some of the tables are not very well-defined and initially there was a proliferation of tables...I think tables are just burdensome and I chair one of the tables. Actually, it is a pretty good table. We meet together three times a year now. Otherwise it is burdensome for staff.
3. The new structure mandated that we need to build relations. So everybody with an issue calls a table with people with similar topics. Everybody gets exhausted with all these little tables... So there is still a lot of confusion. There are several tables that are really functioning well. What I would do is look at these tables and see what it is that attracts the passion around them and how the persons in charge lead the tables so they keep moving, and what kind of progress comes out of them.

E. Communication/Cooperation with Other Organizations¹²

¹⁰ See page 9, # b. & c. of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

¹¹ See page 9, # 8.a. & page 10. #b. of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

¹² See page 10. # E. 1, 2, 3; & page 10. #b. of the *Numerical Results for Total Sample*

Although few (10) expressed any opinions about how well the cooperation between the UCC National Ministries and UCC seminaries is progressing, most of these felt this was going at least fairly well. .

Considerably more (78) had an opinion about how well the UCC National Ministries was communicating with other denominations. Almost all felt that UCC was and is a leader among denominations in ecumenical cooperation. One drawback mentioned is that the UCC Ecumenical Officer does not have status comparable to ecumenical officers of other denominations. Generally, the opinion seems to be that the new structure has continued rather than expanded ecumenical involvements and ministries. Those who through their office, team, table or Ministry had some ecumenical program relationship with other denominations, felt UCC is fairly well holding its own in ecumenical missions and ministries.

Few (9) knew how, if at all, the UCC national church is involved in interfaith work. This small minority seemed to concur with one or two exceptions that: (1) UCC national level offices and officers are doing relatively little in interfaith work, presently; but (2) nonetheless the national church is probably doing as much as it realistically can given limited resources and other priorities.

The following staff members explains:

- With regard to our interfaith commitments, there is no official place in the structure, except for a little sliver of the job of those with ecumenical commitments....especially in global ministries, whose work is interfaith as well as ecumenical ...The new structure did not hurt ecumenical or interfaith work, but it did not do anything to strengthen it either.

F. Has Sharing Within and Between Teams and Covenanted Ministries led to Creative Program Ideas?

There is very mild affirmation given to the value of inter-ministry, cross-level and organizational sharing in arriving at creative program ideas.¹³ About ten pointed to the Identity campaign as a prime example of *creative program ideas* arising from cross-ministry communication and partnerships, and twice that number saw this as outstanding example of *mission coordination* between ministries and other parts of the UCC.¹⁴ Even though the “God is Still Speaking” idea may have originated within one team/ministry, ideas for its implementation have come from sharing ideas across covenanted ministries.

Reasons advanced for why more creative ideas have not resulted from these cooperative structures and collaborative arrangements, are:

1. since there is little unreserved program money, there is little incentive to come up with exciting new program ideas that will cost extra money;
2. with the downsizing, current staff have more assigned to them than they can realistically accomplish as it is;

¹³ See page 11. # F., 1, 2, 3, 4.

¹⁴ See also page 14, #D (bottom of page).

3. and these stresses in addition to intra and inter team turf issues and personal conflicts, make the
4. cost of time in collaboration not work the profit in creative ideas, which individuals might have come up with anyway. And finally,
5. the Mission Planning Council which was supposed to be the group in which the most creative ideas from cross-sharing would emerge, is a dud.

In summary, The first hope that the new structure would “create a culture of cooperation and collaboration across the UCC” and “equity among the partners working together” is viewed as one the new structure has assiduously tried to implement. Although this hope has been met in part, its aspects and outcomes received lukewarm affirmation of its value for UCC. This is because efforts to achieve cooperation and collaboration do not necessarily facilitate (and may in some instances even undercut) the achievement of Hopes 2, 3, 4, and 5.

II. HOPE 2. HOPE FOR MISSION COORDINATION

A. Generally

There is a very lukewarm affirmation at best from all groups overall to how well the UCC national church level is doing in mission coordination and strategic planning. The conference ministers and team leaders are most dissatisfied.¹⁵

Strategic planning is being best carried out *within* individual ministry teams and Covenanted Ministries (but not across teams and ministries), and second best within the Collegium. However, it is hard to do effective strategic planning even within one Ministry, unless the rest of the national church is also involved in planning. In illustration, as one board executive commented:

- I think our board and I'll bet the other boards too, suffer from lack of any strategic or advance long term or short term planning. There is no recognition of the value of planning in the institutional culture of this organization.

B. The Executive Council

The Executive Council/General Synod should be involved in mission coordination, and is indeed credited with doing some of this fairly well. Some object to the less than equitable nature of the Council because it is heavily dominated by OGM representatives. This makes it difficult for the Executive Council to be seen as a representative body. As another executive on this Council explains:

- One of the reasons why it's difficult for the Executive Council to take a unilateral action is because we're not a representative group. If we take action on something relative to Wider Church Ministries, we do not represent Wider Church Ministries, except for a few people from this Ministry. Its sort of like – we shouldn't be messing in their business because we don't know from the outside of all their inner goings on.

More broadly, however, another EC member reflects general frustrations that this Council could be doing more in the way of mission coordination and strategic planning, if only it would:

- It does seem to me that the Executive Council comes as close as anybody to being the one who should simply say “we insist.” We don’t do that very often because we are always so nice, and we never want to hold anybody accountable. ..The Executive Council is a General Synod interim body and has this authority, and if nobody else will do it, we need to say this must be done.

C. The Mission Planning Council

Almost all queried who heard of the Mission Planning Council, the ideal center of mission coordination and strategic planning in the new structure, believe it is an abysmal failure.¹⁶ Why?

¹⁵ See page 12. # A , and pages 13-14 in *Results for Total Sample*

¹⁶ See page 13. # 4 in *Results for Total Sample*

1. It does not include conference ministers, and hence cannot realistically plan for the whole Church.
 - Conference minister: I don't see how it can work until it is made up of representatives from various settings (not just national staff).
 - Board member: Instead of the Mission Planning Council, we need a new organization that would include the Collegium and the leaders of the boards first, and then conference ministers or their representative in proportionate amounts. Those three units, discussing churchwide priorities, mission and planning issues, is really what is needed.
2. It doesn't work for the same reason any inter-ministry collaborative group doesn't - or in other words overwhelmed people with work in their own ministry units, turf issues, and motivating reason to meet:
 - Team leader: The Mission Planning Council is a failure. That was one place where there was supposed to be a lot of cooperation. But .. people were absorbed with how much they have to do in their own shops, or whatever. ..What makes it dysfunction is the lack of cooperation; people are not motivated to cooperate for whatever reasons.
3. The Mission Planning Council cannot motivate people to take part because it has no authority or clear purpose.
 - Team leader: For the Mission Planning Council to work , it is going to have to be allowed to work. The Collegium has made it clear on a couple of occasions that the Mission Planning Council are not decision-makers. That makes it difficult to move forward. It does not mean that we can't sit, have conversations, and make recommendations to the Collegium, but it is chilling of that process.
 - Staff: We are three years into the structure, and the Mission Planning Council has done nothing....All people on the Mission Planning Council, the Executive Council, and the Collegium should probably have some kind of management training. It was clear to me from the beginning that this was not likely to work....our executives just did not know how to do this. Like most people under stress, they fell back on things that they knew how to do... worship and a lot of team building exercises. For what? ...All the cum-ba in the world isn't going to get us out of this one!

D. Common Services

The new unit for coordinating staffing, purchasing, copying and the like is viewed by the as one success of mission coordination by many who knew something about it.¹⁷ Those who are most pleased with Common Services tend to be staff members as well as the few (4) conference ministers who have had contact with this office in mailings and the like.

¹⁷ See page 14. # d in *Results for Total Sample*

- Staff: Common Services allows me to be able to come in and say, “We are all duplicating a lot of things, lets try to come up with a comprehensive management program. That way we’ll know who does what records, and you’ll know where you can go to find that information without having to keep a whole entire filing cabinet on your floor, on the 5th floor and the 7th floor.

Dissatisfactions with Common Services are expressed more by those in other Covenanted Ministries, whose budgets are charged a regular sum for Common Services, and who account to this department for purchases.

E. Current Successes and Future Problems

There have been relatively successful measures taken in streamlining and centralizing some services used by all. . There has been some coordination evidenced around the four mission priorities generally: leadership development, identity, justice and evangelism. The Identity and “God is Still Speaking” national and church wide efforts are cited as examples of coordination

However, the lack of a strategic plan for the national church as a whole is a source of frustration as well as apprehension, particularly given the financial crisis.

III. HOPE 3. HOPE FOR INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

A. General Churchwide Accountability: Comparatively Speaking

The degree of accountability for the whole church evinced in words and behaviors by those who work on the national church level is seen by many as an improvement over the old structure of thirteen autonomous instrumentalities. Even those who came after the restructuring perceive national leaders and staff generally demonstrating responsibility to their units, teams, ministry departments, conferences and congregations. However, accountability to be effective still needs much more collaboration and coordination between and across different units of the Church.

Three-fifths of those interviewed assess the national church officials and ministries as doing fairly well in exercising accountability to the whole church.¹⁸ However, the remaining two-fifths mention a number of problems that makes their assessment of the degree of accountability exemplified on the national level less than satisfactory. Team leaders are least satisfied with the extent of accountability demonstrated.

The kinds of problematic issues and blocks to accountability mentioned are similar to those named as obstacles to effective collaboration and coordination. The lack of clear lines of authority is a major hurdle to achieving better accountability, along with the lack of a strategic plan for the whole church. More operational transparency, clearer and timely communication from the top leaders to those below them, would help the efforts to increase accountability along with the trust level. Accountability will be improved, a number believe, if there is a more realistic assessment of what is possible, given available resources and who is to be responsible for what goals.

General accountability is nearly inextricably tied to financial accountability on the UCC national church level. This fact has both negative and positive consequences. Because there is not enough money for all ministries, boards, teams, and tables to do what they want as well as they want, turf conflicts with ensuing lack of coordination will continue. On the other hand, some feel the financial restrictions will necessitate greater accountability with positive implications for effective ministry coordination on the national church level.

B Financial Accountability: Where and How Well Done?

There have been clear attempts to account for expenditures and reduce costs within the national church offices. A slight majority of those interviewed believe that financial accountability is being handled fairly well; however that leaves a substantial majority who believe that financial accountability too needs improvement.¹⁹ Team leaders are especially likely to be in this minority. Half of the conference ministers also have some doubts about the national church's financial accountability and reporting.

Most interviewed believe that individual covenanted ministries watch their budgets carefully, and most believe the Collegium does too.. This is perhaps why officers and ministry board executives are most satisfied with the degree of financial accountability and reporting on the national church level.

¹⁸ See page 15. # d. in *Results for Total Sample*

¹⁹ See page 16. in *Results for Total Sample*

Financial accountability across covenanted ministries is quite another matter, however, and poorly done according to the few who have the knowledge to make this assessment²⁰

Common Financial Services is seen as a boon to the national church offices by many in getting their bills paid, checks sent, and obtaining financial reports. Although it has not always been the case that financial reports are as readable, accurate, and timely as board members, team leaders and staff might need and want, this was noted by some as having improved over time.

The situation of three treasurers in different Ministries who supposedly collaborate, although one of them has the title of CFO, is a major source of disagreement as to the effectiveness of the arrangement. Each treasurer has particular responsibilities special to the particular Ministry. At the same time, the CFO has little or no authority over these treasurers, and even less over national church finances. Most responding felt that better coordination, streamlining and financial accountability would be enhanced by putting all the treasurers into one office reporting to the CFO. A very strong minority, however, can be expected to object to this solution.

Raising new money is certainly being attempted, but the lack of great success in this area is creating some dissatisfaction with how well it is being done. Strongly suggested efforts for national staff to make in the future are to:

1. prepare and disseminate materials for teaching people about stewardship on every setting of the Church;
2. continue making connections with local churches; and especially
3. reach out to conferences and thank their leaders for supporting the national church.

More comments were made about how to promote better financial accountability for the funds that are available. Especially on the minds of staff are the lack of financial accountability caused by inconsistent standards across covenanted ministries in costs for travel (particularly), number of hours worked and whether at the office or home, salaries and benefits, supplies, and the size of events planned, including food costs for attendees.

Others were equally concerned that financial accountability include examining very closely the need to do all the different kinds of ministries and missions currently planned. Financial accountability does involve setting priorities, using both vision and realistic projections. Several suggested that perhaps more training in such matters for team leaders and other officials would be helpful to increasing financial accountability.

C. The Office of the General Minister and President:

On hearing the interviewers' question about whether the new structure helped to clarify and strengthen the Office of the President, a substantial number of persons expressed surprise that was an intentional goal of the new structure. Perhaps partly for this reason, those interviewed were somewhat divided on whether this Office was clearer and stronger now, with more leaning toward "No" clarification.²¹

The conference ministers are most pleased with the way the President's Office operates currently, mainly because they greatly respect John Thomas, and are also glad to have one staff member, Loren Cope, assigned to be a major contact with conferences.

²⁰ See pages 17-18 in *Results for Total Sample*

²¹ See page 19 in *Results for Total Sample*

However, the officers and ministry board executives are far more negative about how well this office is working in leadership accountability, an opinion voiced even more strongly by team leaders.

Positive aspects of this Office are the leadership gifts of John Thomas, and the fact that the office support allows him to be such a good public face for UCC. The office is somewhat stronger than in the old structure due to the president having to relate equitably to only four covenanted ministries rather than thirteen instrumentalities, a revision which also allows the president to have a better understanding of what is happening across national ministries. Too, unlike the old structure, the Office now has its own funds.

Negative aspects of this Office are the fact that there are still insufficient funds allocated for the work demanded of this Office. Far more problematic to clarifying and strengthening the Office is confusion about the relationship of the Office to the Collegium, and the reality of there being no clear national leader. This last weakness is expressed in two ways: (1) Those outside the national offices in UCC, as well as those in other denominational offices and in secular organizations, expect there to be one clear national church leader. Hence the UCC leadership team is very confusing. (2) There now needs to be some one within the national church offices who can say “no” to better achieve general and financial accountability, and probably that should be the president.

III. **HOPE 4. HOPE FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE STAFFING**

A. Staffing - Needed or Redundant?

In line with financial accountability measures, many interviewed know that efforts have been taken to eliminate duplications and unneeded positions. There are major differences of opinion on how well this has been accomplished.²²

Board members and conference ministers are fairly pleased with any efforts the national church takes along these lines. The staff expresses fairly favorable attitudes as well toward the elimination of redundancy, but some of their comments indicate that some may have said this because they were afraid of being eliminated themselves.

Those in the officer/executive group and team leaders are considerably less content with efforts to eliminate redundancy. Cutting staff for reasons of redundancy can result in too few staff left in a department to do its normal workload, especially when the few remaining are not readily able to pick up the work of those whose jobs were eliminated. As noted, the situation of the three treasurers in different Ministries as well as different and also racial/ethnic desks, are situations under scrutiny by some as examples of inefficient use of staff.

B. Personnel Policies – Clarifying and Fair?

Those interviewed who brought up personnel policies in terms of job clarification and fairness are mainly staff. There are divisions among staff in how well these policies were implemented,²³ tending toward more being dissatisfied..

²² See page 20 in *Results for Total Sample*

The need to reduce staff is not questioned, however, the way in which persons have been terminated evokes more negativity. The morale among those remaining can suffer too. Some have felt that new people hired simply see their work as paying jobs, with little interest in the UCC or even knowledge of how it works. This is a likely factor in why staff members interviewed are particularly likely to both bring up the question of whether the UCC national church should act more like a church or more like a business, and express different opinions.²⁴

IV. **HOPE 5. HOPE FOR A DIVERSE/INCLUSIVE CHURCH**

A strongly stated mission and success of the UCC on the national church level has been to exemplify a diverse and inclusive church body. Fully two-third are convinced that UCC national church is successful in this area, and most of the remainder see this hope as being fairly well met in practice.²⁵

Because the UCC is predominantly Euro-Anglo in membership and because its conferences and especially congregations have a degree of autonomy, what can be done on the national level is somewhat less possible on the conference staff level, and far less possible on the local church level. This reality does not mean efforts should not be continued to expand the extent of diversity on these regional and local levels. The national offices have been working in cooperation with interested conferences to do just that as staff and funds allow. Although the materials UCC puts out in hard copy and on its website in languages other than English is helpful in expanding the membership, these relationships take nurturing on face-to-face basis as well. UCC is considered a leader in working to help churches accommodate physically challenged members well.

Like other denominations, UCC is experiencing resistance from more theologically conservative local churches in its open and affirming policies, and in trying to establish congregations which are mixed in race and ethnicity. Racial and ethnic minorities that join UCC may not be open to gays and lesbians in their midst.

POSTSCRIPT: The restructuring of the UCC national church offices and ministries has been a dramatic organizational innovation. It has also been traumatic when it does not meet the hopes of those who planned it, or who can no longer stay with it. Many in UCC as well as in other denominations have much to learn from what UCC officers, executives, team leaders, board members, staff and others have attempted and experienced in the last three years.. A number interviewed noted that although more efforts to improve meeting all five hopes will be needed in the coming years, changing organizational cultures to this extent takes time, and much has been accomplished.

²³ See page 21 in *Results for Total Sample*

²⁴ See page 24. VI.A in *Results for Total Sample*

²⁵ See page 22 in *Results for Total Sample*

Immersiong myself in these extraordinary interviews over the last month -- some very upbeat, some angry or disappointed, and many with deep insights as well as cutting remarks – I became as interested as the Committee to find out what the forest would look like once the “numbers” were tabulated. It may need some brush cleaned out, but to me it looks quite alive and growing!

Appendix C

Numerical Results for UCC Total Sample

NUMERICAL RESULTS FOR UCC TOTAL SAMPLE

Note: The percentages reported in answers to questions are based on numerical codes developed to analyze open-ended interviews. The code book and coding was done by A. Lummis, Summer 2004. See narrative report for further information on coding process.

1. **Sample size.** 99 individual response + 44 group responses = 143 number for total sample

2. UCC Group membership

6	Officers of the Church
6	Executives of the Pension Board, UC Foundation, Council for Health and Human Services and Insurance Board
15	Team leaders of Covenanted Ministries
72	Staff of the Covenanted Ministries
3	UCC Seminary Presidents
2	Representatives of group with a seat on Executive Council
21	Members of the Board of Directors of OGM, Local Church Ministries, Wider Church Ministries, and Justice ministries
18	Conference ministers

I. FIRST HOPE: HOW WELL ACCOMPLISED IS THE COOPERATION

A. Between National Setting ministries and local churches of the UCC

1. Overall: is national more accessible/understandable to congregations?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
16%	21	a. yes
45%	59	b. yes, probably
26%	35	c. mixed, not sure
13%	17	d. no, no probably
100%	132	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Yes, or Yes probably"

42%	(5 of 12)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
47%	(7 of 15)	b. team leaders
74%	(52 of 70)	c. staff
42%	(10 of 24)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
55%	(6 of 11)	e. conference ministers

2. Responsiveness of National to local churches & clergy, better?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
19%	21	a. yes
61%	69	b. yes, probably
15%	17	c. mixed, not sure
5%	6	d. no, no probably
<u>100%</u>	<u>113</u> # usable answer	

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Yes, or Yes probably"

67%	(6 of 9)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
69%	(8 of 12)	b. team leaders
84%	(54 of 64)	c. staff
89%	(16 of 18)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
60%	(6 of 10)	e. conference ministers

3. Connection/coordination of local churches with National level, better?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
4%	4	a. yes
32%	32	b. yes, probably
39%	39	c. mixed, not sure
<u>25%</u>	<u>25</u>	d. no, no probably
<u>100%</u>	<u>100</u> # usable answers	

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Yes, or Yes probably"

0%	(0 of 10)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
33%	(4 of 12)	b. team leaders
52%	(27 of 52)	c. staff
23%	(4 of 17)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
11%	(1 of 9)	e. conference ministers

4. How local churches connected with national

% = % of total sample of 143 , # mentioning each in ()

- 12% (17) a. 4 ministries easier than 13 different places for churches
- 12% (17) b. 100 church visitation program
- 33% (47) c. national staff speak, teach, resource at local churches
- 18% (26) d. use of the 800 number & national staff telephone consulting
- 32% (46) e. streamlined mailing to clergy & churches
- 15% (21) f. UCC newsletter – free, wider distribution
- 36% (51) g. UCC website(s)
- 13% (18) h.1 church and conference groups visit Cleveland UCC Center
- 10% (14) 2. National hosts educational events for specific groups at Center
- 3% (5) 3. churches and national join in big events (e.g. for youth)
- 7% (10) i. Low cost loans to churches
- 3% (5) j. coordination of overseas ministries
- 6% (9) k. the “Identity” mission helps local churches gain members
- 5% (7) l. national networks for different groups have member churches

B. Cooperation between National level and conferences

1. Generally- how well is this working?

% of those answering # responding

- 31% 41 a. well
- 48% 64 b. somewhat well
- 10% 13 c. big differences
- 11% 15 d. not very well
- 100% 133 # usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating “Well”, or “Somewhat well””

- 75% (9 of 12) a. officers & ministry bd executives
- 87% (13 of 15) b. team leaders
- 86% (56 of 65) c. staff
- 69% (16 of 23) d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
- 61% (11 of 18) e. conference ministers

2. Serving local churches should be done primarily through the conferences (rather than national).

% of those answering # responding

- 56% 24 a. yes, better through conference
- 28% 12 b. probably better

3. How national working with conferences, areas named:

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

23% (33) a. conference ministers on each board

19% (27) b. . national staff attend/speak at conference meetings

7% (10) c. collegium meets with Cabinet & individual. Conference ministers

33% (47) d. nat church partnering in programs & new ch starts.

2% (3) e. helping conferences help churches find pastors

13% (18) ___f.. inviting conference church groups to visit national.

3% (4) ____g. national and global mission coordination

29% (42) h. national staffs consult with conference minister

6% (9) i. UC News has section on conference activities
44% (13) ii. National
11% (3) iii. International
11% (3) iv. Other

11% (16) ____j. National has one person esp. for conferences
22% (16) International, but no full-time, full-fledged Missionary

8% (12) k. national consultations of all conf. Min. in February

4. Conferences role in planning on national level

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
32%	29	a. better now
45%	40	b. somewhat better now
21%	19	c. mixed or big differences
<u>2%</u>	<u>2</u>	d. not better, rather poor
100%	90	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Better", or "Somewhat better"

60%	(6 of 10)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
80%	(12 of 15)	b. team leaders
87%	(33 of 38)	c. staff
77%	(10 of 13)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
57%	(8 of 14)	e. conference ministers

5. Problems of national church restructuring & conferences

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

10% (14) a. without restructuring autonomous conferences

1% (2) b. are conference representatives - representative of their conference?

8% (11) c. do conference representatives on boards communicate to others- trickle down
does not always flow

4% (6) d. conference ministers do no understand collegium model.

4% (7) e. conference officials do not understand importance of contributing to the whole. (national

7% (10) g. poor coordination between particular national ministries and conference(s) in policy areas

4% (6) h. national's programs, resources not wanted by conf.

2% (3) j. Smaller, busier conference staffs have less time to coordinate with national or to attend national meetings.

C. Collegium Officers working together

1. Generally, how well does the Collegium function?:

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
38%	35	a. quite well
39%	36	b. fairly well
19%	18	c. mixed, not sure
4%	8	d not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>93</u>	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Quite Well", or "Fairly well"

100%	(12 of 12)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
40%	(4 of 10)	b. team leaders
75%	(33 of 44)	c. staff
100%	(15 of 15)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
58%	(7 of 12)	e. conference ministers

2. Consensus model of decision making in Collegium – how well does it work?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
21%	9	a. quite well
27%	12	b. fairly well
34%	15	c. mixed, not sure
18%	8	d not very well
<u>100%</u>	<u>44</u>	# usable answers

3. More open, honest effective discussion in Collegium (compared old larger table of Instrumentality executives).

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

4% (6) mentioned

4. Sometimes disjunction between Collegium member 's responsibility to Whole Church and to his/her own Ministry boards

10% (15) mentioned

5. No one person in charge

25% (35) mentioned

6. Representation/persons on Collegium

6% (8) a. personalities/abilities of individuals central
2% (3) b. CFO, Pension Bd, foundations not there, shd be

7. Collegium focus – too much on administration, not enough on visioning

4% (6) mentioned

D. Within and between National Ministries boards and units - how well working together?

1. Generally:

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
16%	19	a. quite well
57%	70	b. fairly well
20%	24	c. mixed, not sure
7%	9	d not well
100%	122	# usable answers

Generally continued:

By UCC Group Status Categories
% = % indicating "Quite Well", or "Fairly well"

92%	(11 of 12)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
46%	(6 of 13)	b. team leaders
70%	(46 of 67)	c. staff
86%	(18 of 21)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
90%	(8 of 9)	e. conference ministers

2. How well is this working with 4 boards compared to the old system?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
41%	19	a. quite well
33%	15	b. fairly well
22%	10	c. mixed, not sure
4%	2	d not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>46</u>	# usable answers

3. Setting priorities, cooperation within each Ministry generally

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
4%	1	a. quite well
44%	10	b. fairly well
35%	8	c. mixed, not sure
17%	4	d not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>23</u>	# usable answers

4. Within my ministry board or unit

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
33%	16	a. quite well
45%	22	b. fairly well
12%	6	c. mixed, not sure
10%	5	d not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>49</u>	# usable answers

5. Establishing priorities and cooperation across boards/staffs of different ministries, how well being done now?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
7%	3	a. quite well
15%	7	b. fairly well
52%	24	c. mixed at best
<u>26%</u>	<u>12</u>	d not well
100%	46	# usable answers

6. Problems with boards of national ministries

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

7% (10) a. dealing with individual board autonomy from national whole
12% (17) b. turf issues
6% (9) c. board members are volunteers: member turnover in conjunction with few board meetings a year.
7% (10) d. lack of consensus on what the board is supposed to do
2% (3) e. problem of finding racial/ethnic diverse persons,

qualified & interested in being board members

7. Teams

a. How well are teams/is your team working collaboratively?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
62%	49	a. quite well
19%	15	b. fairly well
18%	14	c. mixed at best
<u>1%</u>	<u>1</u>	d not well
100%	79	# usable answers

b. How well do team leaders work together?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
17%	10	a. quite well
30%	17	b. fairly well
33%	19	c. mixed, not sure
<u>20%</u>	<u>11</u>	d. not very well
100%	57	# usable answers

c. Problems with Teams and/or Team leaders named

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

- 4% (6) different personalities do not work well in groups
- 5% (7) hard to brainstorm/creative in time/work crises
- 11% (16) turf and trust issues
- 4% (5) team leaders incompetent in area, need more training
- 7% (10) insufficient no of meetings, or time to meet
- 3% (4) meetings take up too much time
- 1% (1) not efficient to check with team on minor decisions
- 1% (1) team leaders have no decision-making power

d. Areas where cooperation is not taking place

- 6% (8) sharing funds, resources across teams
- 3% (4) fund raising coordination between teams
- 1% (2) units giving time priority for other units (rather than own).
- 8% (12) vertical communication down, in a timely complete way
- 6% (8) horizontal communication between units
- 4% (5) lots of talk, sharing – but no actual decisions

8. Tables – Inter-Ministry

a. How well working :

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
33%	16	a. quite well
41%	20	b. fairly well
22%	11	c. mixed, not sure
<u>4%</u>	<u>2</u>	d. not very well
100%	49	# usable answers

b. Problems with Tables

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

- 4% (5) a. different portfolios make cooperation difficult

4% (5) b. turf and trust issues

9% (13) c. time taken by tables – too much cost for worth

6% (9) d. need clearer definition of purpose of tables, including how many tables,
how many from each ministry should go to same table

3% (4) e. “group think” may detract from individual expertise & accountability

1% (2) f. personalities at tables created blocks, conflicts

E. Cooperation/Communication between National and

1. Seminaries

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
50%	5	a. quite well
40%	4	b. fairly well
<u>10%</u>	<u>1</u>	c. mixed, not sure
100%	10	# usable answers

2. Other Christian Denominations: Ecumenical Affiliation

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
46%	36	a. quite well
45%	35	b. fairly well
8%	6	c. mixed, not sure
<u>1%</u>	<u>1</u>	d. not very well
100%	78	# usable answers

3. Other Faiths: Interfaith Affiliations

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
11%	1	a. quite well
44%	4	b. fairly well
0%	0	c. mixed, not sure
<u>6%</u>	<u>4</u>	d. not very well
100%	9	# usable answers

F. Has sharing among/between levels led to creative program ideas?

1. Generally:

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
11%	8	a. yes
52%	37	b. yes, to some extent
21%	15	c. mixed, not sure
16%	11	d. little or none
100%	71	# usable answers

2. Examples: %= % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

7% (10). ____ Identity campaign mentioned as 1 instance of sharing
5% (7) . ____ "God is still speaking" – sometimes mentioned as an example of non-cross level sharing, came out of one department..
2% (3) ____ Cost-effective ideas, such as monthly mailing

3.. Cross-level sharing due less to structure and more to:

2% (3) ____ a. values and culture of sharing, covenant
3% (4) ____ b. individual leaders abilities, personalities

4. Problems in cross-level sharing blocking creative ideas for programs

10% (14) ____ a. Staff have more assigned to them than they can realistically do, .
12% (17) ____ b. Tight finances stymies being able to put on creative programs
5% (7) ____ c. Problem & conflicts within or between team, unit, ministry
3% (4) ____ d. trust level generally low
5% (7) ____ e. too much time spent in "collaboration" for sake of collaboration.

II. SECOND HOPE: HOW WELL ACCOMPLISHED IS THE MISSION COORDINATION:

How well does Strategic Planning and Visioning, take place.

A. On the National Church level – overall?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
2%	2	a. quite well
37%	49	b. fairly well
39%	51	c. mixed, not sure
<u>22%</u>	<u>29</u>	d. not well
100%	131	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Quite Well", or "Fairly well"

36%	(4 of 11)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
7%	(1 of 15)	b. team leaders
46%	(31 of 67)	c. staff
50%	(11 of 22)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
25%	(4 of 16)	e. conference ministers

1. Within the Collegium

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
20%	14	a. quite well
49%	34	b. fairly well
21%	15	c. mixed, not sure
<u>10%</u>	<u>8</u>	d. not well
100%	71	# usable answers

2. Within the Office of the General Minister and President

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
20%	4	a. quite well
40%	8	b. fairly well
20%	4	c. mixed, not sure
<u>20%</u>	<u>4</u>	d. not well
100%	20	# usable answers

3. Within the Executive Council/General Synod

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
11%	4	a. quite well
46%	16	b. fairly well
23%	8	c. mixed, not sure
<u>20%</u>	<u>7</u>	d. not well
100%	35	# usable answers

6% (or 9) commented that one of the problems with the Executive Council was that OGM representatives dominated it.

4. Within the Mission Planning Council

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
0%	0	a. quite well
6%	5	b. fairly well
22%	18	c. mixed, not sure
<u>72%</u>	<u>58</u>	d. not well
100%	81	# usable answers

5.. Ministries: Within individual ministry units/ boards/teams

a. In mine :

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
52%	37	a. quite well
36%	26	b. fairly well
6%	4	c. mixed, not sure
<u>6%</u>	<u>4</u>	d. not well
100%	71	# usable answers

b. Cross Teams

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
10%	3	a. quite well
30%	9	b. fairly well
43%	13	c. mixed, not sure
<u>17%</u>	<u>5</u>	d. not well
100%	30	# usable answers

c. Coordination Cross Ministries

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
6%	2	a. quite well
9%	3	b. fairly well
46%	16	c. mixed, not sure
<u>40%</u>	<u>14</u>	d. not well
100%	35	# usable answers

d. Coordination New Unit: Central or Common Services

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
43%	21	a. quite well
31%	15	b. fairly well
12%	6	c. mixed, not sure
14%	7	d. not well
100%	49	# usable answers

B. Does National Need To Do Strategic Planning Now?

%= % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

27% (38) **Yes** Especially including the following groups:

19% (27) ____ across boards and ministries

12% (17) ____ with conference officials

C. Four Priorities areas: leadership development, identity, justice and evangelism.

7% (10) ____ mentioned, as instance of mission coordination

D. The Identity Campaign and “God is Still Speaking” as examples of cooperation

21% (30) ____ 1. identity campaign mentioned

12% (17) ____ 2. “God is still speaking” mentioned

III THIRD HOPE: ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Overall: compared to old structure or how it seems now

	<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
	12%	16	a. quite well
	42%	56	b. fairly well
	37%	49	c. mixed, not sure
	<u>9%</u>	<u>12</u>	d. not well
	100%	134	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating “Quite Well”, or “Fairly well”

64%	(7 of 11)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
28%	(4 of 14)	b. team leaders
51%	(36 of 71)	c. staff
100%	(15 of 15)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
60%	(9 of 15)	e. conference ministers

B. Broad Issues mentioned in accountability (named =1)

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

18% (26) ___ Authority confusion: “Accountable to whom for what?”

15% (22) ___ First need strategic plan before moving toward mutually defined, measurable goals

4% (5) ___ Need time lines, resources and staff responsible for goals

9% (13) ___ Need to increase the trust level

12% (17) ___ Need better vertical, clearer communication & transparency

8% (11) ___ Need prioritizing – toward doing fewer things better

6% (9) ___ Need ongoing training on UCC national, where to go for what

5% (7) ___ Money scarcity strengthens accountability (since greater need)

C. Financial accountability and reporting: How well done now?

1. Overall

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
12%	16	a. quite well
46%	59	b. fairly well
30%	38	c. mixed, not sure
12%	16	d. not well
100%	129	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Quite Well", or "Fairly well"

73%	(7 of 11)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
36%	(5 of 14)	b. team leaders
60%	(40 of 67)	c. staff
65%	(15 of 23)	d. sem. Pres, EC & Bd members
50%	(7 of 14)	e. conference ministers

2. Where are issues of financial accountability being dealt with?

➤ **50% (71) On the Collegium level**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
32%	23	a. quite well
45%	33	b. fairly well
16%	11	c. mixed, not sure
6%	4	d. not well
100%	71	# usable answers

➤ **27% (39) Executive Council**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
23%	9	a. quite well
54%	21	b. fairly well
20%	8	c. mixed, not sure
3%	1	d. not well
100%	39	# usable answers

➤ **46% (66) Each Ministry's Budget-finance committee**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
50%	33	a. quite well
32%	21	b. fairly well

17%	11	c. mixed, not sure
<u>1%</u>	<u>1</u>	d not well
100%	66	# usable answers

➤ **13% (19) Across ministries**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
0%	0	a. quite well
16%	3	b. fairly well
58%	11	c. mixed, not sure
<u>26%</u>	<u>5</u>	d not well
100%	19	# usable answers

➤ **21% (30) Chief Financial officer**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
23%	7	a. quite well
33%	10	b. fairly well
17%	5	c. mixed, not sure
<u>27%</u>	<u>8</u>	d not well
100%	30	# usable answers

Problems raised about CFO

13% (18) CFO lacks authority over national finances
 3% (4) Not enough staff in CFO office for workload

➤ **22% (32) Three Treasurers**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
16%	5	a. quite well
9%	3	b. fairly well
25%	8	c. mixed, not sure
<u>50%</u>	<u>16</u>	d. not well
100%	32	# usable answers

➤ **41% (58) Common Financial Services**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
28%	16	a. quite well
42%	24	b. fairly well
15%	9	c. mixed, not sure
<u>15%</u>	<u>9</u>	d. not well
100%	58	# usable answers

3. What might promote better financial accountability?

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

11% (16) more accurate, readable & timely financial statements, budgets

11% (16) someone who has the authority across ministries to say "no"

5% (7) give team leaders more training on fiscal management

8% (11) more open communication and transparency

5% (7) (less) ambivalence about trespassing on another Ministry

3% (4) teach people need for stewardship giving other.

12% (17) reach out to conferences, bds of directors & thank them

7% (10) national continue connecting with local congregations

11% (16) evaluation of continued need of every kind of national ministry,
set priorities to do fewer things better

9% (13) be not so captive to group causes, racial-ethnic, gay-lesbian, etc.

30% (43) common, consistent standards across Ministries in:

22% (31) travel

3% (4) salary & benefits

6% (9) # of hours worked and where (office or home)

3% (4) supplies, purchases (e.g. computers)

4% (6) events – size of event, how much food and who pays, etc.

D. How well did the new structure clarify/strengthen the office of the General minister and President ? (or How well is this office working?)

1. Generally:

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
15%	17	a. quite well
34%	38	b. fairly well
19%	22	c. mixed, not sure
<u>32%</u>	<u>36</u>	d not well
100%	113	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating “Quite Well”, or “Fairly well”

20%	(2 of 10)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
15%	(2 of 13)	b. team leaders
52%	(32 of 62)	c. staff
59%	(10 of 17)	d. sem. presidents, EC & Bd members
82%	(9 of 11)	e. conference ministers

2. Positive Issues in clarification or work of President’s Office

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

34% (48) ____ leadership gifts of John Thomas

29% (41) ____ office allows John Thomas to be public face of UCC

6% (8) ____ better for president to know what is happening across boards

9% (13) ____ collegium of 5 (instead of 15) strengthened office

8% (12) ____ office funded independently of ministry boards

4. Negative Issues in clarification or work of President’s Office

32% (45) ____ confusion of relationship of office to collegium

19% (27) ____ conferences & other agencies want one clear leader, not five

19% (27) ____ need some one across national boards who can say “no”

11% (15) ____ still insufficient money incoming for this office

IV. HOPE 4: EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE STAFFING

A. Staffing - Needed or Redundant?

1. Checking for non-duplication of positions - How well done?

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
21%	19	a. quite well
38%	35	b. fairly well
23%	21	c. mixed, not sure
<u>18%</u>	<u>16</u>	d. not well
100%	91	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Quite Well", or "Fairly well"

29% (2 of 7)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
22% (2 of 9)	b. team leaders
64% (32 of 50)	c. staff
77% (10 of 13)	d. sem. presidents, EC & Bd members
62% (8 of 12)	e. conference ministers

2. Issues Mentioned in Reducing Duplication of Staff

% = % of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()

8% (12) non-duplication, but not enough staff in area with cuts to do needed work

6% (8) people afraid to talk about duplications, they might be seen as dispensable

6% (8) too many different ministries still; do fewer things better

6% (8) in cutting staff, make sure that remaining staff are cross-trained

3% (4) correct the "three treasurer" situation and have CFO be CFO

3% (4) combine the different racial/ethnic desks - put together in one unit

E. Personnel Policies – Are they clarifying, fair?

1. How well done:

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
2%	2	a. quite well
47%	29	b. fairly well
31%	19	c. mixed, not sure
<u>20%</u>	<u>13</u>	d. not well
100%	62	# usable answers

2. Problems/issues -(Mainly Being Reported by Staff and Team Leader)
% = *% of total sample of 143, # mentioning each in ()*

16% (23) downsizing done poorly, negative impact on morale inside & outside

<u>Team Leaders</u> (n=16)	<u>Staff</u> (n=72)
12% (2)	28% (20)

6% (8) exempt/non-exempt confusions and unfairness

4% (5) portfolios for similar positions not comparable in income or work

4% (5) new hires who not UCC, see this as a job, not a ministry

3% (4) new hires training insufficient in UCC national structure

V. HOPE FOR A DIVERSE/INCLUSIVE CHURCH

A. *How well is this being done on National Church level?*

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
68%	69	a. quite well
25%	26	b. fairly well
7%	7	c. mixed, not sure
0%	0	d. not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>102</u>	# usable answers

By UCC Group Status Categories

% = % indicating "Quite Well", or "Fairly well"

100%	(9 of 9)	a. officers & ministry bd executives
75%	(9 of 12)	b. team leaders
96%	(45 of 47)	c. staff
95%	(20 of 21)	d. sem. presidents, EC & Bd members
92%	(12 of 13)	e. conference ministers

B. *In the conferences*

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
12%	4	a. quite well
27%	9	b. fairly well
36%	12	c. mixed, not sure
<u>24%</u>	<u>8</u>	d. not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>33</u>	# usable answers

C. *In the local churches.*

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
2%	1	a. quite well
5%	2	b. fairly well
25%	11	c. mixed, not sure
<u>68%</u>	<u>30</u>	d. not well
<u>100%</u>	<u>44</u>	# usable answers

D. In terms of particular groups on the National Church level

➤ **1. People of color**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
67%	30	a. quite well
27%	12	b. fairly well
4%	2	c. mixed, not sure
<u>2%</u>	<u>1</u>	d not well
100%	45	# usable answers

➤ **2. Gay/lesbian**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
48%	18	a. quite well
46%	17	b. fairly well
3%	1	c. mixed, not sure
<u>3%</u>	<u>1</u>	d not well
100%	37	# usable answers

➤ **3. Physically challenged**

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
57%	8	a. quite well
36%	5	b. fairly well
7%	1	c. mixed, not sure
<u>0%</u>	<u>0</u>	d not well
100%	14	# usable answers

➤ **4. Gender – i.e. Women**

All (4% of the total sample, or 5) who mentioned attention to women indicated that this was quite well done on the national level.

➤ **5. Non-English Language Materials**

All (4% of the total sample, or 5) who mentioned UCC attention to putting out material in hard copy or on the web in languages other than English, indicated this is at least fairly well done presently..

6. Openness to Diversity of Opinions in UCC (especially regarding gay/lesbian issues)

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>	
12%	2	a. quite well
12%	2	b. fairly well
23%	4	c. mixed, not sure
<u>53%</u>	<u>9</u>	d not well
100%	17	# usable answers

7. Other Areas in Openness to Diverse Constituents

- 4% the total sample (or 5 persons) brought up the difficulty in “openness” between racial/ethnic groups/individuals and gay/lesbian groups/individuals.
- 4% of the total sample (or 5 persons) mentioned the difficulty of combining persons of different racial/ethnic minorities or cultures in a group, or particularly in starting new multicultural congregations.
- 2% of the total sample (or 3 persons) were very concerned about the UCC being more open to the opinions of youth and young adults.

VI. OTHER REFLECTIONS (*Questions not asked in interviews, but raised by those interviewed.*)

A. Should UCC National Offices act more as a church or as a business?

10% of the total sample (or 14) who are in great majority staff, were divided on whether the national offices should act more like a church or business.

<u>% of those answering</u>	<u># responding</u>
36%	5 a. more like a church
36%	2 b. mixed - or want church, need business
<u>28%</u>	<u>4</u> c. more like a business
100%	14 # usable answers

B. Changing Organizational Cultures Takes Time – Be Patient

9% of the total sample (or 13) spread across the different groups interviewed voiced their opinions that changing organizational cultures takes time – much has been done, much remains to be done – be patient.